

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0217

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO28

VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

Amendment to Registration

June 17, 1999

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 27, 1999

What is significant?

South Melbourne Town Hall, originally known as Emerald Hill Town Hall until the name of the municipality was changed in 1883, was designed by Charles Webb to house the Emerald Hill Town Council, Public Hall, Mechanics Institute and Library, Post and Telegraph Department, Police Department and Courthouse and Fire Brigade. It was built by Gillon and Treeby and officially opened on 30 June 1880.

A large turret clock was added to the clock tower in 1881. The interior was refurbished and additions made in the 1930s to designs by Oakley and Parkes, undertaken by builder G. Farnsworth and supervised by City Engineer A. E. Aughtie. The low mansard towers that originally flanked the central tower were removed in 1945. The Town Hall, built on an elevated site, in the Victorian Academic Classical style with French Second Empire features, is a rendered building featuring a wide facade with a central portico and projecting pavilions at each corner. The facade is dominated by a giant order Corinthian colonnade expressed as pilasters along the walls, fluted engaged columns on the pavilions and freestanding columns on the projecting portico with a triangular pediment embellished with the words 'Town of Emerald Hill' and the municipality's coat of arms. A tall tower with a cupola, mansard and Baroque colonnettes clustered at its base is centred behind the pediment. The side facades have detailing of comparable complexity to the front facade.

The Jubilee Fountain, situated in the forecourt, was designed by G H Henderson and built in 1905 to commemorate both the jubilee of the municipality and the 140 local residents who fought in the South African Boer War and the 8 who died. The tall, temple-like fountain is set on bluestone steps with granite columns and canopy, brass font and two bronze plaques. The fountain is surmounted by ironwork supporting three gas globes constructed in 1994 as a reproduction of the original design.

How is it significant?

South Melbourne Town Hall is of architectural, historical and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

South Melbourne Town Hall is of architectural significance as an outstanding example of a Victorian Academic Classical style building with French Second Empire influences. While the Bank Street facade with its giant order Corinthian portico displays a monumental symmetry, the east and west facades are also well resolved and the northern elevation features an accomplished articulation of the various functional elements contained within the complex. It is an important and sophisticated example of the work of architect Charles Webb, one of the leading architects of the 19th century. The Town Hall is further distinguished by its outstanding landmark and townscape qualities. Set on the crest of a hill with a forecourt, fountain, four street frontages and a framed vista to the portico and tower provided by the planning of Perrins Street, the building enjoys a prominent position unparalleled in Victoria. The interior, remodelled by Oakley and Parkes with some of the work carried out by Brooks Robinson, is a fine example of 1930s design incorporating blackwood panelling and a redecorated auditorium with special acoustic treatment and ventilation.

South Melbourne Town Hall is of historical and social significance as the civic centre of South Melbourne over a long period. One of Victoria's grandest town halls, the monumental building symbolises the prosperity and confidence of South Melbourne last century when it was one of the first municipalities to be changed from a town to a city after the 1874 Local Government Act. The Town Hall has a long history as the centre of community cultural life. It was the first Town Hall to achieve an integrated municipal facility with a range of functions.

The Jubilee Fountain is of historical significance for its associations with the jubilee of the first working council outside Melbourne and Geelong. It is also of historical and social significance as a memorial associated with the Boer War in Victoria and symbolises the deep sentiments of the community towards this important event in Australian history. The importance of the fountain lies in the combination of associations with the Town Hall, the jubilee of the municipality and Boer War commemoration.

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of

the registered place or object.

2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.

3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.

4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

Exterior

Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.

Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.

Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.

Regular garden maintenance.

Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering systems, provided the installation or replacement of the watering system/s do/does not cause short or long term moisture problems to the registered structures.

Interior

Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.

Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.

Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves and skirtings.

Repair of plasterwork provided that all new work matches good adjacent work in style, detail and finish.

Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings, eg vinyl.

Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.

Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.

Refurbishment of post-1940 bathrooms, toilets and or en suites including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.

Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.

Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.

Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.

Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Repairs, demolition or removal of suspended ceilings but not replacement.

Repairs, demolition, removal, relocation and replacement of internal office partition walls to existing office spaces provided such works does not affect pre 1940 building fabric.

Construction dates	1879,
Architect/Designer	Webb, Charles,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	JUBILEE MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN,
Hermes Number	1520

Property Number

History

Contextual History:

History of Place:

South Melbourne Town Hall, originally known as Emerald Hill Town Hall until the name of the municipality was changed in 1883, was designed by Charles Webb to house the Emerald Hill Town Council, Public Hall, Mechanics' Institute and Library, Post and Telegraph Department, Police Department and Courthouse and Fire Brigade. It was built by Gillon and Treeby and officially opened on 30 June 1880. A large turret clock was added to the clock tower in 1881. The interior was refurbished and additions made in the 1930s to designs by Oakley and Parkes, undertaken by builder G. Farnsworth and supervised by City Engineer A. E. Aughtie. The low mansard towers that originally flanked the central tower were removed in 1945.

Associated People: Charles webb, architect

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

South Melbourne Town Hall is of historical significance for its associations with South Melbourne, one of the first municipalities to be changed from a town to a city after the 1874 Local Government Act. One of Victoria's grandest town halls, the monumental building symbolises the prosperity and confidence of South Melbourne last century. It was the first Town Hall to achieve an integrated municipal facility with a range of functions.

The Jubilee Fountain has historical associations with the jubilee of the first working council outside Melbourne and Geelong and with the involvement of Victorians in the Boer War. It symbolises the deep sentiments of the community towards this important event in Australian history. The importance of the fountain lies in the combination of associations with the Town Hall, the jubilee of the municipality and Boer War commemoration.

Criterion B

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

Criterion C

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

Criterion D

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

Criterion E

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

South Melbourne Town Hall is an outstanding example of a Victorian Academic Classical style building with French Second Empire influences and exhibits a richness and diversity of features. While the Bank Street facade with its giant order Corinthian portico displays a monumental symmetry, the east and west facades are also well resolved and the northern elevation features an accomplished articulation of the various functional elements contained within the complex. The Town Hall is further distinguished by its outstanding landmark and townscape qualities. Set on the crest of a hill with a forecourt, fountain, four street frontages and a framed vista to the portico and tower provided by the planning of Perrins Street, the building enjoys a prominent position unparalleled in Victoria. The interior, remodelled by Oakley and Parkes with some of the work carried out by Brooks Robinson, is a fine example of 1930s design incorporating blackwood panelling and a redecorated auditorium with special acoustic treatment and ventilation.

Criterion F

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations

or achievements.

Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

The Town Hall has social associations with the South Melbourne community as the centre of community cultural life over a long period.

Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 217 is now described in the category as a Heritage Place:

South Melbourne Town Hall, 208-220 Bank Street, South Melbourne, Port Phillip City Council.

EXTENT:

1. All of the buildings marked B1 (South Melbourne Town Hall) and B2 (Jubilee Memorial Drinking Fountain) on 600364 held by the Executive Director.
2. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram Number 217, held by the Executive Director being part of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 1488, Folio 585 and all of the land marked L2 described in Tree Reserve, Gazetted 26 July 1905, p2806.
3. All of the following specified objects: 1930s curved seat and desk unit for councillors located in the former Council Chamber. 1930s Mayor seat located in the former Council Chamber.

Dated 3 June 1999.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 24 17 June 1999 p.1431]

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>